

Nuclear-Sharing Talk Places

By Karl E. Meyer
Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, Nov. 22—Midway in the prolonged dialogue on nuclear sharing in NATO, observers here agreed today on one point: Though the problem may be essentially European, America in the end will have to produce a solution.

The result is a familiar, perplexing dilemma for the United States Government. It can be expressed this way:

If the United States takes the lead in deciding whether to give Germany a bigger role in nuclear policy, then it will be accused of

dictating to Europe and of making Bonn a favored partner.

If, on the other hand, Washington remains passive and says in effect that Europeans must agree first on a solution, then the talks will probably go on forever.

McNamara, Ball Coming

This assessment follows last Friday's meeting between British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart and German Foreign Minister Gerhard Schroeder. The whirl continues this week. British Defense Minister Denis Healey meets with his German counterpart,

Kai-Uwe von Hassel, on Thursday.

The same day, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and Under Secretary of State George Ball will stop in London en route to the Paris meeting of NATO Defense Ministers.

There was a mild flurry here about a report from Henry Brandon, Washington correspondent of the London Sunday Times, to the effect that the Americans are prepared to suggest that the British sell or internationalize four Polaris submarines.

These four submarines,

which will cost some \$840 million, will form the core of an independent British deterrent that Prime Minister Wilson once said Britain didn't need.

In effect, according to Brandon, the Americans could save money, redeem an old pledge and help solve a NATO problem by agreeing to let Germany participate in joint manning and financing of the submarines.

But neither American nor British sources have caught any hint of such a proposal, nor do they see any chance of it being accepted.

(In Washington, officials

U.S. in Middle

THE WASHINGTON POST

Tuesday, Nov. 23, 1965

A 7

said the idea of internationalization was a variant of the British proposal for an Allied nuclear force, the ANF scheme. The idea of the United States buying the Polaris subs was ascribed to McNamara.)

The principal objection is that in agreeing to share or sell Polaris, Britain would be giving up a major bargaining counter only to get in return a very unpopular result — German joint control of nuclear hardware.

Fear Blow to Accord

(In Parliament today, Stewart said the British-proposed ANF "was, and still is, the British government's proposal," Reuters reported.)

At bottom, British offi-

cials are fearful that any significant concession to German desires for shared control would chill whatever hope exists for an East-West treaty to discourage the spread of nuclear weapons.

The British have no objection to giving Germany a greater voice in consultation on nuclear policy through a special committee along lines suggested by McNamara. The conviction is that Germany would protest but would go along.

If the United States threw its weight behind that argument, many British believe, then the way would be open to doing serious business with the Russians on a whole range of world issues.

With all this the Germans

obviously disagree, but they do concur that the decisive moment may come when Chancellor Erhard visits President Johnson early in December.

"It is the knowledge that Mr. Johnson must decide," one worldly observer re-

marked, "that explains why there is more interest here in the debate within the American Government than the endless talks between the Europeans.

"Of course, you'll be roundly condemned for whatever you do, but that is the price of being 'Mr. Big.'"